

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-34 are pending in the application. In addition to claim 2, which was previously cancelled, please cancel claims 3 and 4 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 5-23 and 25-34 are withdrawn. Claims 1 and 24 have been amended. Claims 1 and 24 are currently under examination.

Rejections under 35 U.S. § 112 first paragraph

According to the Examiner, "the specification, while being enabling for a mouse whose genome comprises a homozygous disruption of the exon 1 of the endogenous Na_v2 gene, wherein the disruption results in a phenotype of normal salt intake under water sufficient conditions, when compared to wild-type mice, but shows an increase of hypertonic saline under water and salt-depleted conditions, when compared to a wild-type mouse and methods of screening using the knockout mouse, the specification does not reasonably provide enablement for a null mutant non-human animal characterized in showing salt intake behavior similar to that of wild-type animals under water-sufficient conditions and showing much more intakes of hypertonic saline compared with wild-type animals under water and salt-depleted conditions, and methods of using the same." Therefore, the Examiner is of the opinion that the specification does not enable a person of skill the art to make or use the invention commensurate in scope with these claims.

Applicants disagree with the above rejection. However, in an effort to expedite prosecution, claims 1 and 24 have been amended to recite "a null mutant mouse ..." Claims 2-4 have been cancelled, rendering moot the rejection of those claims.

In light of the above amendment, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 USC § 112 second paragraph

1 With respect to the rejection of claims 1, 3, 4 and 24 over the term "which," the Examiner states that,

" [the claims are unclear] ... because it is unclear if "which" refers to the genes or the animal."

Applicants disagree that claims 1 and 24 are unclear. Rather, it is clear to one of skill in the art reading the claims that the term "which" refers to the mouse, not to genes. A mouse can show salt-intake behavior; a gene cannot do so.

Claims 3 and 4 have been cancelled, thereby obviating the rejection.

2. With respect to the rejection of Claim 24: According to the Examiner:

"Claim 24, as written, is unclear... The claim fails to provide an active step for screening the material."

Applicants disagree with the above rejection. However, in an effort to expedite prosecution, claim 24 is amended to recite steps 1) - 3).

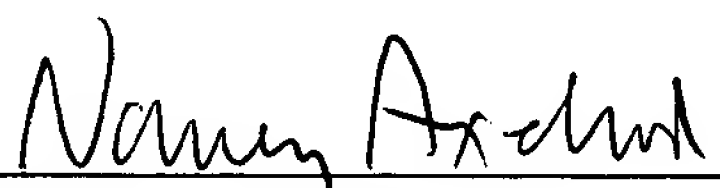
In light of the above amendment, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In light of the amendments and arguments presented, it is believed that the application is in condition for allowance, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

If any additional fees are necessary, please charge such fees to our Deposit Account No. 22-0261.

Respectfully submitted,

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